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The SUBSTANCE of Mr. BLACKERBY'S SPEECH, on Monday the 9th of March, 1695, to the Assessors appointed by the Commissioners of Finsbury-Division, in the County of Middlesex, for putting the Act of Parliament for Four Shillings in the Pound in Execution; and also the Substance of the Additions he the said Mr. BLACKERBY made to the same: Delivered at the meeting of the Commissioners of the Tower-Hamlets, in the said County of Middlesex, on Thursday the 12th of the same Month of March.

Gentlemen,

THE Design of this Meeting is to put the Act for raising four Shillings in the Pound in Execution; and that it may be put in Execution according to the true intent and meaning of it, give me leave to offer a few things to you in this method.

I shall take notice who and what Persons are Rateable, for what, and in what manner: I shall next give you some directions for your more effectual putting this Act in Execution. And lastly, press the same upon you by such Arguments, as I hope will be of force to prevail with you.

The Persons Rateable are all Persons whatsoever having Real or Personal Estates, or both, and they are to be Rated for both, after the Rate of four Shillings in the Pound; that is to say twenty four Shillings for every hundred Pound of Personal Estate, and four Shillings for every twenty Shillings of Rents, or Annual Profits of Real Estate; and this without any manner of abatement whatsoever.

But, Gentlemen, there are other Persons who are to be Rated Double; I make it my most earnest request to you that you would take particular Care that you let none of them escape; they are of four kinds. The first are they who by Fraud conceal their Estates. The second are Papists, and reputed Papists. The third are they who are sixteen years of Age, and upon Summons shall refuse to take the Oaths that are required to be taken instead of the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy. And the last are such Gentlemen, or so reputed, or writing themselves so, or being above that Quality, who did pay, or ought to have paid

Double by the Poll Act made in the third year of his present Majesty King *William*, and the late Queen *Mary* of ever blessed Memory; and who shall not in ten days come in and take the Oaths.

This is the Act, and these the Persons you are to Rate, and this the manner of rating them. It is, Gentlemen, an Act of our own making, for we are all virtually in the House of Commons, and have by our Representatives consented to be thus Rated; and I hope, Gentlemen, you will not act contrary to what you have consented to.

But you will say this is a very difficult Task, who can perform it? How shall we be able to do this with that exactness which is expected?

For your help therefore, Gentlemen, in this, I shall in the second place give you some Directions; which if you pursue, I promise myself we shall have much more advantageous Rates for the Government than we have of late had. In the first place get a Copy of the last Poll Books in your respective Parishes, Precincts, or Divisions; by which you will discover who were at that time rated Double, and be able to return their Names to the Commissioners, that so, if they shall not in ten days come in, and take the Oaths, the Commissioners may discharge their Duty in this particular. In the second place, Enquire from House to House with all diligence, and take the most exact account you can, not from the *Jacobites*, or any Persons that are not well affected, much less from Persons ill affected to this Government; but from Persons who are neither disaffected nor stingy. In the third place, Return to the Commissioners the Names

of

of all Persons who not only deny, but who are unwilling to give you a true and just account of their Estates and Lodgers, that the Commissioners may be rendred thereby the more capable of doing the King and Kingdom service by Levying on them 20 *l.* a Man. And in the last place, Return to the Commissioners the Names of all Persons who are of the Age of sixteen years, that so the Commissioners may summons them before them to take the said Oaths.

Now, Gentlemen, That I may do what in me lies to prevail with you to do your utmost, for the Rating all Persons to the full, according to the true intent and design of this Act; I shall offer the following things to your most serious Consideration.

In the first place, you are under the Obligation of an Oath; for altho the Oath heretofore Administred to the Assessors be not Administred to you, yet you are Sworn to be true to the King; and therefore they that make a false Certificate or Rate, are false to this Oath.

In the second place, you are subject and liable to a Penalty, which the Commissioners have power to inflict, and that is 30 *l.* a Man, in case it shall appear to them that you have not honestly done your Duty. And I must tell you, Gentlemen, that whatever you may think of some Persons named in this Commission; there are a number of Gentlemen that are therein named, who are resolved to see Persons Rated to the full, if it be possible, and will inflict the Penalty upon all who shall be found guilty of any wilful neglect; and all they will be found so, who either omit to Rate, or under Rate.

In the last place, I desire you, Gentlemen, to consider that to put the Act in Execution, in the manner I have directed you, is your own Interest; for I must tell you, he that is not a Friend to the Publick, is none to himself. It is also, Gentlemen, for the Service of his Majesty; and what Obligations he hath laid upon his Subjects to be truly Faithful and Obedient to him, are so well known that I need not mention them. It is moreover, Gentlemen, for the good and welfare both of King and People, as he is their Head, and they Members of that Body whereof he is the Head. Now, there is nothing more natural than for the Members to defend their Head; and I would persuade my self that you will not shew your selves so unnatural to your Sovereign Head, as to diminish any part of the Defence of his Royal Person and Government, which the Taxes are a great part of: and they are so, Gentlemen, in a more special manner at this Juncture, when we are actually engaged in a War with *France*, the most justifiable War

that ever *England* was engaged in: for it is a War not only with *France*, but with *Rome*, yea with Hell it self. For surely this Plot (lately discovered, or rather that Old damnable hellish Plot discovered in the year 1678. discovered a new) was laid and formed in Hell, by *Lucifer* and his Council, promoted and carried on by the Pope, the *French* King, the late King *James*, Papists, reputed Papists, Non-Jurors, and other disaffected Persons to this Government, called *Jacobites*.

Which Plot, Gentlemen, was first to have Assassinated his Majesties Royal Person, for which purpose divers Persons were employed by the late King *James*, and others; and so laid was this Design, and so far was it advanced, that it is not only next to, but a Miracle wrought by God himself, that the Blow (as the Conspirators themselves call it) was not given. A most terrible Blow it would have been; for upon the King's Death an Invasion from *France* had immediately ensued: and what the Consequence of that would have been, is dreadful to think on; our Wives and Daughters Ravished, our Babes Brains beaten out before our Faces, our selves Plundered, if not knockt o'th' Head; and if spared, to no other purpose but to live in the most extreme Misery, and to be put to Death at last with the utmost Cruelty. For, Gentlemen, if the Papists Mercies are cruel, what is their Cruelty itself? Truly no thought can conceive it, no Tongue express it.

But this is not all, Gentlemen, the worst is yet behind, our Religion, Laws, and Civil Government were to have been subverted; and instead of the glorious Light of the Protestant Reformed Religion, we were to have been clapt under Chains of Popish Darknes, which is Blacknes of Darknes. Instead of Laws to be governed by, and raising Moneys by Law, we were to have been governed by absolute Will and Pleasure, and Taxes raised by Dragoons. In a word, had this Plot taken effect, our Exchange would have proved to an unspeakable loss, the Gospel (which some Men call Cant, but I tell them it is no Cant); I say the Gospel, Liberty and Property, under a Protestant King, for Popery, Arbitrary Power, and Slavery, under a Popish Tyrant.

Since then these sort of Men, who are to be Doubly Rated, have had so great a share in such Designs as these, I hope you will neither omit, or abate any of them, what is by this Law due from them; and the rather for that,

Here in this New Plot, or rather the Old One a fresh discovered, you may (as in a Glass Face answers Face) see what was designed and intended in the promoting of our Civil Dissensions and Differences in the Reign of that Unfortunate

fortunate Prince King *Charles* the First, and carrying of them on till they brought King and Kingdom into a Headless State.

Here we see the Actors in all the Convulsions of State, till they restored a Popish King with a Protestant Vizor.

Here we see the Protestant Vizor taken off, and the Popish Countenance put on, in the burning this Protestant City in the year 1666, in the violent Prosecutions of the Protestants in *England*, as well as *France*; in shamming a true Popish Plot, and putting divers Sham Plots upon the Nation.

Here we see the Design of opposing the Bill of Exclusion, and setting the Crown upon a Papist's Head, without his Mask.

Here we see who imbrued their Hands in the Innocent Blood of the truly Noble and Renowned Patriot, and Champion for his Country, and the Protestant Cause, the Lord *Russell*; and of the Brave and Noble *Algernon Sidney*; and also in the Blood of that never to be forgotten Gentleman, for his Integrity and steady Adherence to the Protestant Interest, Alderman *Cornish*; and the Blood of the many hundreds who were Murdered in the *West* in an unheard of, and unexampled manner.

Here we see for what Reason the Bishops were sent to the Tower; all the Laws were dispensed with, Papists advanced to Places of Profit and Trust, and nothing wanting but a *French* Army to compleat the Work.

Which having been prevented, under God, by his present Majesty, and the same sortment of Men having now contrived, if possible, to bring over a *French* Army to make us Slaves and Papists; away with all Names of Parties and Factions among us, which ill Men have been the Contrivers and Fomenters of, on purpose to keep up our Divisions, Heats and Animosities: away with the Names of *Whigg* and *Tory*, Churchmen and Dissenters, Presbyterian and Independant, and all other Names that may keep us from a fixed and settled Union for the Service of his Majesty, and the Government. And let us all Unite with one Heart, and as one Man, to defend his Majesties Royal Person and Government, against all his Enemies both at Home and Abroad; and then I hope God Almighty (who hath hitherto most miraculously preserved both him and us) will in the Course of his Providence order Matters so, that these Nations will in a short time be settled in Peace and Quiet.

Gentlemen,

THUS Far I went on *Monday* Morning last in *Finsbury* Division, and had not given you this trouble now, had it not been for two Reasons. The one the importunity of some,

no ill affected Men (I'll assure you) to this Government, and the other a Clause in the Act, which I shall Read to you. 'Tis in these words, viz.

And all Commissioners, Collectors and Receivers, are hereby required and enjoined to apply themselves with all diligence to the most speedy and effectual Execution of their several and respective Duties, and to use their utmost Endeavours that all Estates herein charged may equally pay the Rates and Assessments, according to the Direction of this Act, that so his Majesty's Service herein, may not be delayed or hindered.

I hope then, I may be excused for this once going out of my own Division, for I will promise you I shall not be easily intreated to do it again. I would not bring upon my self the Name of a running Commissioner, as some have done in this Reign, who made it their business to go from Division to Division on purpose to hinder, and not further the Execution of Acts for Taxes. I speak this by Experience, for I was served so in my own Division last Year; and when they found they could not obtain their ends of me, there was a meeting as soon as I was gone out of Town, and in three Cases (all settled upon hearing the Parties, and all that could be said upon their Appeals) there was an Alteration made to the Kings damage; this I but lately discovered, for our late Clerk to the Commissioners was so wonderfully honest to this Government, that he never acquainted any of the Commissioners (who were active in the Execution of that Act) with it.

But Gentlemen, This is not to accuse any one here, but in excuse of my Self for coming hither, and to justify the Commissioners who chose Mr *Starkey* Clerk for the County, which Mr *Starkey* I know hath suffered for the Protestant Interest, and who will content himself with the Fees allowed by Law, without the least endeavouring to enrich himself by any indirect means whatever.

Gentlemen,

I have something farther to offer for the most effectual Execution of this Act.

Yesterday three of the Conspirators were Tryed, Convicted, and Condemned; five Witnesses proved the Treason (all Papists as I am informed) which was the Assassination of his Majesties Royal Person, being the first part of the Plot, and they all said, that it was agreed

agreed at all the Consults, that the late King *James* was not to be, nor could any ways be Restored, unless the Spark, meaning King *William*, were cut off; who I trust in God will (as he hath hitherto been) be preserved from all their Rage and Malice.

The Gentlemen's names who were tried, are *Charnock*, *Keys* and *King*, who had nothing to say for themselves, and did not deny the Fact; but insisted upon the benefit of an Act made this very Session of Parliament: Entituled, *An Act for Regulating of Tryals in Cases of Treason, and Misprision of Treason*, which Act is not to take place till the twenty fifth of this Month; and yet they would fain have had it that they were within the Equity of it.

Gentlemen,

I have not yet learnt from any Hand, nor do I believe that there was either Illegality, Unfairness, or Partiality in the Tryal: There was no wresting of Law, no Suborn'd Witnesses, no pack'd Jury, no Papers given them for their Defence taken from them, no hindering of Lawyers, or any others to come to them; but on the contrary, notwithstanding they are Condemned for no less Crime than High Treason, and

that Treason of the blackest Dye; yet are their Friends admitted to come to them with all the justifiable freedom that can be.

And now, Gentlemen, The intended Assassination is fully proved, and three Persons concerned in it, Condemned for it, I hope there are none will be so impudent as to deny it.

There are now four Arguments to Convince, and I would hope may Convert the *Jacobites*, and they are, the Battle at the *Boyne*, the taking of *Namur*; Admiral *Russell's* Blocking up the *French Fleet* that were designed to Invade us, and the Legal and Fair Tryal, Conviction, and Condemnation of *Charnock*, *Keys*, and *King*, for designing most barbarously and unmanly to Murder our Rightful and Lawful King.

Gentlemen,

I could open a great many more plain, yet amazing Truths, but I am afraid you are not yet able to bear them, and therefore I forbear you. I desire you would think seriously of what I have said to you, and then I cannot but believe you will take an effectual Course that this Act be put in due Execution.

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